

THE FESTIVAL OF PENTECOST

The Day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. was an extremely significant event in the plan of God. On this Pentecost, one method by which a person could gain salvation ended and a new and better method began. On this Pentecost, the first covenant with national Israel began to come to an end and a new and better covenant was established for future generations of Israelites, the first sons of the Father's New Creation, and the rest humanity. In addition to the enactment of a new covenant, many prophecies reached their partial or total fulfillment on this day. This study details the many important past and present and literal and prophetic meanings of this festival day. (6 Documents)



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The Feast of Weeks/ Pentecost

An explanation of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) as it was observed in ancient Israel and the symbolic meaning of the two loaves of wheat bread that were offered during this festival. (8 pages) b5w51

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Where God's Name and Presence Reside on Earth

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A Day of Beginnings and Endings

The central theme of the Feast of Weeks is beginnings and endings. These beginnings and endings have to do with the start and finish of events that radically alter the social, political, and religious lives of those whom God is directly dealing with in conjunction with his plan for the salvation of humanity. This study details some significant historical events that began and ended on the Feast of Weeks. (8 pages) [b5w54](#)

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Pentecost, the Day Jesus Returns

One of the most misunderstood topics of the Bible is the return of Christ. Most people do not begin to comprehend the magnitude of the events that surrounds this climactic event, and they do not understand its importance in the overall plan of God for the future of humanity. The first resurrection will undoubtedly be one of the most awesome and glorious events to ever take place on the Day of Pentecost. This study details several earth-shaking events will happen the day that Jesus returns to the earth on this festival day. (10 pages) [b5w55](#)

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The Lift Offering and the Counting of Pentecost

The English translations of the scriptures that detail how to calculate the day to present the Lift Offering are unfortunate because they cloud the clear meaning and intent of God's instructions about how to

calculate the day of Pentecost. Fortunately, however, it is possible to understand God's intended meaning when we go directly to the original Hebrew language in which these instructions were given. This study explains how to calculate the lift offering and Pentecost from the Hebrew texts, so that there will be no mistake made in the day of its observance. (7 pages) b5w56

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THE FEAST OF WEEKS

The Feast of Weeks, which was also known as the Feast of Harvest of First-fruits (Ex.23:16), Day of Weeks (Lk.4:16, Acts 13:14; 16:13), and the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16) is the second annual festival of the year and occurs at the end of the wheat harvest:

"And the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of your labors, which you have sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when you have gathered in your labors out of the field" (Ex.23:16 KJV).

Ancient Israel was predominately an agricultural society, that had a spring harvest of grain and a fall harvest of fruit. The harvesting of grain in the spring always began with the barley harvest during the Feast of Unleavened Bread and ended with the much larger wheat harvest 50 days later:

"Celebrate the Feast of Weeks with the first-fruits of the Wheat harvest . . . Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign Lord, the God of Israel" (Ex.34:22-23 NIV).

This is the second annual festival season in which all Israelite males are commanded to go before God and present him with their offerings of gratitude in the place where he chose to place his name and presence.

Leviticus 23:15-20 Paraphrased

"And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day of your bringing of the omer of the Lift Offering, seven complete Sabbaths will be, until the day after the seventh Sabbath, you will count fifty days, and you will offer a new grain offering to the Eternal" (vs.15-16).

The Feast of Weeks is observed exactly fifty days from the day after the first weekly Sabbath that falls during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

It is important to note that both the offering of the first-fruits of the barley harvest and the first of the wheat harvest have great prophetic significance. Both are symbolic of the New Creation (God's elect children) who are the first of their kind. And both are presented to God for his acceptance as something sacred to him. See Jer.2:3; Ezk.20:40; 48:14, and our study concerning the sons of the new creation.

The Offering of Leavened Bread

"From your dwelling places you will bring bread for a lift offering: [loaves] of two tenth deals [of an ephah] of fine flour they will be: With leaven they will be baked: they are first fruits to the Eternal" (v17).

On the Feast of Weeks, there was to be an offering of two loaves of bread baked with leaven. This is

the only offering that was presented to God with leaven. However, this leavened bread was only presented to God, it was not to be burnt on the altar.

These two leavened loaves were presented to God at about 9 a.m. for his acceptance. As with the Lift Offering, these loaves were presented in a lifting motion—extending the arms and hands upward in presentation to God who dwells in heaven. After the loaves were offered to God, they were given to the priests. See Lev.23:15-20.

"And you will offer along with the bread seven spotless lambs, each one year old, and one young bull, a son of the cattle, and two rams. They will be a whole burnt offering to the Eternal, and their grain offering and their drink offering: and offering, a pleasant scent to the Eternal" (v18).

"And you will offer one male goat for a purification offering, and two lambs, each one year old, for a fellowship sacrifice. And the priest will lift them, along with the bread of the first-fruits: a lift offering before the Eternal along with the two lambs. They will be holy to the Eternal [and] for the priest" (vs.19-20).

"And you will proclaim in this day, you will have a holy assembly. you will not do any work of labor. A perpetual statute in all your dwelling places for your generations" (v21). See also Num.28:26-31.

A Day of Remembrance

Deuteronomy 16:9-12 NIV

"Count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings of the Lord your God has given you" (vs.9-10).

"And rejoice before the Lord your God at the place he will chose as a dwelling for his Name—you, your sons and daughters, your maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you" (v11).

"Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and follow carefully these decrees" (v12). See also verses 16-17 and Deut.26:1-11.

As with the Days of Unleavened Bread, during the Feast of Weeks, the Israelites were to remember the slavery of Egypt and how and for what purpose God had delivered them from this slavery.

THE GRAIN HARVEST AND THE LIFT OFFERINGS

The grain harvest of Israel began with the cutting of barley for the Lift Offering during the Feast of

Unleavened Bread and ended with the presentation of two leavened loaves of bread out of the wheat harvest, seven weeks later, on the Day of Pentecost.

The Barley Harvest

The Lift Offering that was offered from the barley harvest during the Days of Unleavened Bread is connected to the prophetic and symbolic meaning of the two loaves of leavened bread that were offered on the Feast of Weeks. The following are some of the prophetic and symbolic meanings of the Lift Offering:

- The Lift Offering was made of fine flour from the first cutting of the ripened barley.
- Only after the first barley was cut and offered to God could the grain harvest begin.
- The Offering of the first barley pictured Christ being cut loose from the earth and ascending to God the Father as the first of the New Creation.
- Only after Jesus Christ ascended to the Father could others receive the spirit that transforms one into a son of God.

The Father's First-born

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and became the first-fruits of them that slept" (1.Cor.15:20 KJV).

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation—for all things were created in him, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth; the visible and the invisible; whether thrones, or lordships, or rulers, or authorities, all things have been created through him. And he is before all things, and all things consist in him. And he is the Head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that he be preeminent in all things" (Col.1:15-18 Para.). See also Acts 13:33-35; Rev.1:5 KJV.

"For to which of the angles did he say, You are my Son; today I have begotten You? And again I will be a Father to him, and he shall be a Son to me. And again when he brought the firstborn into the world, he said let the angles worship him" (Heb.1:5-6Para.). Quoted from Psa.2:7. See also Heb.5:5.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached to the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1.Tim.3:16 KJV). See also Matt.3:16-18; Mk.1:9-11; Jn.3:1-10; Heb.1:1-6; 5:5.

Without a doubt, the first grain of the barley harvest that was presented to God as finely ground flour mixed with oil and incense was prophetic and symbolic of Jesus Christ who was the first of humanity to be accepted by God the Father as his son.

THE WHEAT HARVEST

Both barley and wheat are symbolic of something that is the first of its kind, which is presented to God for his acceptance as something that is sacred to him. See Jer.2:3; Ezk.20:40; 48:14.

Just as the first grain of the barley harvest was prophetic and symbolic of Jesus Christ as the first born of God, the first grain of the wheat harvest was prophetic and symbolic of all those who would obtain salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The Prophetic and Symbolic Wheat

After speaking a parable about those who would receive the word of God and how they would react to it, Jesus speaks a parable about the wheat and the tares through which he reveals the symbolism of wheat:

"Another parable put he forth to them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said to him, Sir, did not you sow good seed in your field? from where then has it tares? He said to them, An enemy has done this. The servants said to him, Will you then that we go and gather them up? But he said, No; lest while you gather up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather you together first the tares, and bind them: but gather the wheat to my barn" (Matt.13:24-30 KJV).

This parable specifically pertains to the question of who will be in the Kingdom of Heaven and at what time they will enter into it. Notice that there are two distinct types of grain that were planted—wheat and tares. In verses 36-43, Jesus reveals the exact meaning of the symbols of the wheat and the tares to his disciples. The wheat are people who belong to God and the tares belong to the devil:

"Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came to him, saying, Declare to us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said to them, he that sows the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt.13:36-43 KJV).

In preparation for the ministry of Jesus, John the Baptist speaks of wheat as symbolic of those who would be the elect of God:

"John answered, saying to them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I comes, the latch of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the holy spirit and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable" (Lk.3:16-17 KJV).

Notice that the wheat is spared from destruction, whereas the chaff, which is useless as food, is destroyed with fire. The meaning of the wheat is inescapable; the wheat is symbolic of the elect of God.

During the Passover meal, Jesus warns Peter that Satan wanted to destroy him, but that he had asked his Father to give Peter the faith it would take to overcome evil:

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren" (Lk.22:31-32 KJV).

The important point here is that Jesus again uses wheat to symbolize someone whom God has called to salvation. While speaking of his impending death, Jesus uses wheat to symbolize his death and resurrection, which would bring a dramatic increase in the number of sons of God:

"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit" (Jn.12:23-24 KJV).

Jesus The Bread From Heaven

John 6:31-33; 48-58

"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world" (vs.31-33 KJV).

The Creator God who became Jesus Christ gave the Israelites of the Exodus bread from heaven (manna) to help sustain their physical lives. While in human form this same being called himself the bread that was sent by the Father to give eternal life.

"I am that bread of Life. . . Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . he that eats of this bread shall live forever" (vs.48-51, 58 Para.). See also Matt.26:6-13; Mk.14:3-9; Jn.12:1-7.

The Elect of God

The writings of the New Testament describe Jesus Christ as the bread of life, and those who are part of the body of Christ as bread:

"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge you what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are partakers of that one bread" (1.Cor.10:14-18 KJV).

Jesus was sinless (unleavened), and because the elect are also considered sinless by the Father and are of the body of Christ (the Bread of life), they are also symbolic of bread.

The Larger Harvest

The barley and wheat harvest of ancient Israel were symbolic of God the Father's first harvest of his spiritual children. The small first cutting of the barley harvest was symbolic of Jesus Christ, and the much larger wheat harvest was symbolic of those who would become sons of God through the sacrifice of Christ.

The Two Symbolic And Prophetic Loaves

On the Feast of Weeks there was to be an offering composed of two loaves of bread baked with leaven from the first grain of the summer wheat harvest. These two loaves were the only offerings that were to be presented to God with leaven. However, these loaves of leavened bread were only presented to God, they were not to be burnt on the altar.

Why would God instruct these two leavened loaves to be presented to him when the law of the offerings prohibited any leavening from being offered to God upon the altar?

There are a number of prophetic and symbolic meanings attached to these two loaves of wheat bread:

- The two loaves were made of wheat, which is symbolic of God's people (the elect).
- The two loaves were symbolic of the elect of God from the time of Adam until Christ's return.
- The leavening within the loaves was symbolic of the sins of the elect.
- The acceptance of these two loaves by God was prophetic of the time when those who would be made righteous through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ would be presented to the Father for his acceptance as his spiritual children.
- After the loaves were accepted, they were considered holy and could be used in the service of God (they were eaten by the priesthood). This also is symbolic of the events that will transpire after the first resurrection when the elect of God will be administrators of the government of God

on earth.

- The much larger wheat harvest from which these loaves were made was symbolic of the great number of people who would be made sons of God through the sacrifice of Christ.

Just as the Lift Offering of barley represented Christ as the first fruits of the first grain harvest, these two leavened loaves represented the elect of God (i.e., the first-fruits of the harvest to the Lord). See Lev.23:17.

It is also worth mentioning that Jesus gave several parables which clearly show the first fruits of the grain harvest as symbolic of the spiritual harvest that he was sent to gather. See Matt.9:37-38; 13:19-30; Jn.4:35-37.

The Opportunity for Salvation

Before the Kingdom of God is established on earth, there are only two groups of people who will have been offered an opportunity for salvation:

1. Those who were called to salvation from the time of Adam to the advent of Christ.
2. Those who have been called to salvation after the advent of Christ under the New Covenant.

Each of these two groups of people comes under the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ and will be in the first resurrection. All others must wait until the resurrection of national Israel (Ezk.37) or the resurrection of the rest of the dead (Rev.20:5). See our study about the various resurrections:

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order. Christ the first-fruits, Afterwards, they that are Christ's at his coming" (1.Cor.15:22-23 KJV). See also Matt.13:18-23; Jms.1:18; Rev.14:15-16; 20:4-6.

The Prophetic Numbers

The Number 3

The number 3 is one of the numbers that is used in scripture to symbolize divine perfection. The Feast of Weeks, which is observed in the third month of the sacred calendar, is also the third commanded assembly of the annual festivals and the third annual festival day on which no work is to be done.

The Feast of Weeks is also symbolic of the third step in the process of salvation after the Father leads one to Jesus Christ (i.e., repentance, baptism with water, and the transformation into a son of God through the power of the holy spirit).

When God moved the place where his name and presence were to reside, he documented this move with visible fire. He did this when he moved from Mount Sinai to the tabernacle, from the tabernacle to the temple Solomon built. He moved a third time on The Feast of Weeks in 30 A.D., from the temple that Herod built to his people of the New Covenant.

The Number 7

The number 7 is a number that signifies completeness, perfection, completion, and bringing to an end. The number 49, which is the product of 7×7 , is the perfection of the number 7 and denotes the divine nature of completeness, perfection, completion, or bringing to an end.

The Lift Offering was 7 complete weeks or 49 days from the day on which Jesus Christ ascended to the Father as the first of his New Creation. This 49th day from the Lift Offering is symbolic of bringing an end to the first covenant with National Israel, which was formally discarded in 70 A.D. with the destruction of the temple.

The Number 50

The number 50 is the product of 5×10 . The number 5 signifies the grace of God, and the number 10 signifies the law of God. It is through God's grace and law that humanity will find true freedom and happiness.

The Feast of Weeks is to be celebrated on the 50th day after the Lift Offering. This feast day also falls on the first day of another divine cycle of perfection; therefore, the Feast of Weeks marks an ending and a beginning—the ending of the first covenant with national Israel and the beginning of the New Covenant.

God's plan for the salvation of humanity through his grace and law, which leads to divine perfection and freedom, can be seen within the prophetic symbolism of these numbers associated with the Lift Offering and the Feast of Weeks,

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PENTECOST 30 A.D.

The day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. was an extremely significant occasion in the plan of God. On this Pentecost, one method by which a person could gain salvation ended and a new and better method began. On this Pentecost, the first covenant with national Israel began to come to an end and a new and better covenant was established for future generations of Israelites, the first sons of the Father's New Creation, and the rest of humanity. In addition to the enactment of a new covenant, many prophecies reached their partial or total fulfillment.

Wait in Jerusalem

Before and after his death and resurrection, Jesus promised to send the holy spirit to reside within those whom the Father calls to salvation:

"If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will petition the Father, and he will give you another comforter that he may remain with you forever the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see him, nor know him. But you know him, for he abides with you, and shall be in you" (Jn.14:15-17 Para.). See also Jn.16:13-14.

Power From Heaven

It is important to note that the power of the holy spirit was available to the disciples on a limited basis while Jesus was with them. However, Jesus promised the permanent residence of the holy spirit within those who are truly converted to the Father's way of life:

"And he said, Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again from the dead on the third day; and that this message of salvation should be taken from Jerusalem to all the nations; There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me. You have seen these prophecies come true. And now I will send the holy spirit upon you, just as my Father promised. Don't begin telling others yet—stay here in the city until the holy spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven" (Lk.24:46-49 LBP). See also Acts 1:4-8.

Here, we see Jesus prepares his disciples for the moment when the Father would do the following:

- Place his spirit power within them
- Make them members of his family
- Make them the dwelling place of his presence
- Send them to preach the gospel to all nations from Jerusalem

The Day of Pentecost

Exactly 50 days after the lift offering and the ascension of Jesus Christ to the Father to be accepted as

the first-fruits of the harvest of humanity, about 120 people, including the disciples, gathered to observe the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:12-15).

Some Bible Scholars believe that the disciples and the others gathered in one of the large rooms or porches of the temple that were available for public use. This may be true, because the temple area could accommodate over 200,000 people, and a large number of people heard those who had received the holy spirit speaking in foreign languages. The meeting of the 120 at the temple would have also made it easy for Peter to speak to the large group of people of whom nearly three thousand accepted Christ as their savior. See Acts 3:8-11; 5:12; Jn.10:23-25.

This particular Day of Pentecost was an extremely important day for those gathered at the temple and for the rest of humanity. The fact that the disciples were gathered together on Pentecost should tell us that these followers of Jesus still felt that the Feast of Weeks was to be celebrated. Why else would they have been gathered together on the first day of the week, a day which would have otherwise been a normal work day? Why would they leave their homes, jobs, and other responsibilities unless this day was an observance that was still required as a part of their worship of God?

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1 KJV).

The English phrase 'was fully come' is translated from the Greek word 'sumpleroo', which indicates a specific point in time. This day of Pentecost was not like any other Pentecost in history; this particular Pentecost was on a specific point in time that had been set aside before the creation of the earth as the ending and the beginning of many things within God's plan for humanity.

Both the prophetic and symbolic meanings of this day were fulfilled in exact detail in accordance with the prophecies concerning God's promise of salvation under the New Covenant.

In the Fullness of Time

Before this specific Pentecost, God the Father had sent his son to fulfill his plan for the redemption of humanity and to make it possible for them to become a part of his family. This Pentecost was the day that a large number of the prophetic first-fruits of the wheat harvest would be adopted by the Father into his family as his sons.

"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, having come out of a woman, having come under the law, that he might redeem the ones under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba! Father!" (Gal.4:4-6 Para.).

The Fire of God

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:2-3 KJV).

Before the advent of Christ, we cannot find any record of such an event occurring, and there is no reference to it ever occurring again after the advent of Christ. This was a one-time event that was performed for a very special purpose at a very special moment in history.

During this Pentecost, the fire of God descended upon those who were present. This was the fire of the spirit that was present when Moses met the Creator God at the burning bush. This was also the fire that descended upon Mount Sinai, upon the tabernacle, and upon the temple that Solomon built in order to show that the Creator God had placed his name and presence there.

It is important to understand that the fire of God consumes all things that are impure, because nothing impure can dwell in the presence of God. However, the people that were present this Pentecost were not impure; they were chosen by God the Father to be among the first of humanity to partake of his divine nature. They had been purified through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ; therefore, they were not destroyed by the power of God that came to rest upon and within them.

Just as this fire descended upon the tabernacle and upon the temple that Solomon built, on this festival of Pentecost, the spirit-fire of God descended upon the children of the New Covenant; thereby, the Father had placed his name and presence within a new Temple where he would meet with his people.

On this Pentecost, the place where it was necessary to worship God was changed from a physical building to a living temple of flesh. This is the hour Jesus spoke of when he told the woman of Samaria the hour would come when God's place of worship would be changed and people would be able to worship the Sovereign Father in spirit and in truth (Jn.4:19-24).

The Holy Spirit

As the fire from God rested upon those whom the Father had chosen to become his sons, the holy spirit began to reside within them, and they were transformed into spiritual sons of God at that moment.

"They were all filled with the holy spirit and began to speak in foreign languages as the spirit gave them the gift of speech" (Acts 2:4-6 The Jerusalem Bible).

"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language" (Acts 2:5-6 KJV).

This was the first proof that those people who were touched by the fire of God had indeed received the

holy spirit and had been made a part of the Family of God. See Jn.14:21; 15:1-7; Rom.8:9-11; Gal.6:18; Phm.1:25.

Notice that all of the foreign languages that were spoken by these people were understandable to the listeners, without the need for an interpreter. Perhaps this miracle was not only of speaking foreign languages, but also of understanding for those who were listening.

These Galileans were speaking in the particular dialects of those present:

"And how hear we every man in our own tongue [dialect] wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:8 KJV).

"How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native languages?" (Acts 2:8 The Jerusalem Bible).

In Acts 2 verses 9 and 10, there are at least 17 different language groups referred to. The thing that was so astonishing to those who were present was the fact that each person heard the wonderful works of God spoken in their own particular language.

"We hear them speak in our language the wonderful works of God. And they were amazed and were in doubt, saying one to another, What does this mean? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine" (Acts 2:11-13 Para.).

Many people clearly understood what was being said, whereas others apparently did not.

There is no doubt that, on this Day of Pentecost, both speakers and hearers were the beneficiaries of a special miracle from God. There was no incoherent speech, no unknown languages to decipher, no interpreters were needed—all those who were intended to understand the message understood it clearly.

The prophetic importance of this manifestation pointed to the fact that God was beginning an effort to proclaim his message of salvation to other people besides Israel.

"But Peter, stood up with the eleven, and said to them, You men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, know this, and pay attention to my words: For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day [about 9 a.m.]" (Acts 2: 14-15 Para.).

Nine o'clock in the morning is a very important time because this is about the time that the Lift Offering of barley flour was made during the days of Unleavened Bread. The Lift Offering was symbolic of Jesus Christ as the first-fruits of God the Father's spiritual harvest of humanity.

Nine o'clock in the morning was also the time when the two leaven loaves of bread from the first-fruits of the wheat harvest were presented to God for his acceptance. In Acts 2:14-15, we see the acceptance

of these individuals as sons of God by the imparting of the holy spirit; they were the first-fruits of the summer harvest of humanity.

Prophetic Fulfillment

Why is this important? It is important because, on this particular Feast of Weeks, the prophetic and symbolic meaning of the leaven loaves of wheat bread that were offered on this feast day are fulfilled in those who receive the holy spirit of adoption as sons of God the Father in his spiritual family.

"But this is what was spoken of by the prophet Joel; And it will come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:16-18 Para.). See Joel 2:28, 32; Isa.44:3.

The giving of the holy spirit on this day of Pentecost was only the beginning of the prophecy of Joel; the last half of this prophecy will be fulfilled through the power of the spirit just before the first resurrection and return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. See our study papers on this subject.

Peter's Powerful Sermon

As the people listened to Peter speak about the prophecies, God the Father caused many who stood there to understand the events surrounding this Pentecost in relation to their own personal salvation.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:37-39 KJV). See also Deut.28:14-15; Rom.11:27-29.

There are four very important things to learn from these verses:

1. After Peter had finished explaining the prophecies about the coming of the holy spirit and the murder of Jesus who was the prophesied Messiah, he exhorted them to repent of their evil deeds.
2. Through the preaching of Peter, God the Father revealed to these people the prophetic significance of the Passover that had just been observed and the events that were happening at that moment in time.

There can be little doubt that some of those whom Peter addressed understood that they had participated in the murder of their Messiah and Savior just as the prophecies had foretold. In great fear and shame, they asked Peter, "What shall we do?"

3. Peter gave them a method by which they could have their sins forgiven and be transformed into sons of God:

- Repent
- Be baptized
- Receive the holy spirit

4. Peter explains that this call to repent, be baptized, and receive the holy spirit is made by God the Father to those he specifically calls and chooses to give an opportunity for salvation:

"With many other words he [Peter] warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day" (Acts 2:40-41 NIV).

"And the Lord added to the church daily those who should be saved" (Acts 2 47 Para).

On this Day of Pentecost:

- The Father began the New Covenant Church with the calling of a great number of people to repentance and the outpouring of his holy spirit.
- The New Covenant method by which a person may be saved and obtain immortality in the family of God was revealed through Peter.

Pentecost a Day of Transformation

It is very important to firmly establish in one's mind that the New Testament writers were inspired to repeatedly record the great differences between the physical and the spirit worlds, and that a human cannot enter into the spirit world unless they are completely changed into spirit.

On this day of Pentecost, the first step in the process of being transformed from a mortal human into an immortal God being was begun for those who were found to be under the redemptive power of the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ.

Standard and Optional Equipment

The Standard Equipment

The first human life-form is a physical creation with only the spirit of man. This spirit of man is human and lives within a flesh and blood body. The human spirit is standard equipment; it is the intellect that allows the human life-form to exist on a higher plane than the rest of the physical

creation. See Gen.2:7-8; Deut.32:18; Job 33:4, 6; Ecc.12:5-7; Zech.12:1.

The Optional Equipment

The optional equipment in man is the Father's holy spirit. It is this spirit that transforms humans into sons of God and makes them a part of his divine family.

At the time of spiritual transformation, the Father places his holy spirit into the spirit of man, which causes a human being to become a different life-form. The original spirit of man is merged with the spirit of God and becomes a new spirit-being—a new and different creation. It is unlike the original creation because it has the potential to have eternal life and become immortal as a member of the Family of God. Man's spirit alone does not have this potential and humans can only exist as sentient beings in the physical dimension. The addition of God's spirit transforms the human spirit into a new creation with entirely new potential.

The Beginning of a New Life

The Day of Pentecost is symbolic of the ending of one's old life and the beginning of one's new life as a son of God.

In the baptismal waters, the old human life-form symbolically dies. During this ceremony, the person is purged of all sin by the power of God through the sacrifice of Christ and is released from their death sentence. Upon being baptized with the holy spirit, the old person literally dies and ceases to exist as God the Father merges his spirit with the human spirit. The baptized person with God's spirit is a new creation, a son of God, with the same genetic make-up as other members of the Family of God. Although still physically alive and in the physical form of a human, a converted spirit filled person is a new creature. See Rom.6:4-9:

"For in that he died, he died to sin once: but in that he lives, he lives to God. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom.6:10-11 KJV). See Rom.8:1-16.

As Christ is dead to sin, so are those of the New Creation; they can consider themselves to have already obtained immortality. All that they must do to ensure that they will enter into eternity and immortality after the death of the physical body is to continue to obey God and follow his ways.

God the Father and Jesus Christ possess the highest form of life: immortality on the divine plane of existence. This kind of life springs forth from itself; it is not dependent upon any other source to sustain it because it is self-sustaining. It is this kind of life that those of the New Creation have the opportunity to have through the power of the spirit of God that resides within them.

The Spirit of Adoption

"For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery again to fear, but you received a spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba! Father! The spirit himself (itself) witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, also heirs; truly heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ; if indeed we suffer together, that we may also be glorified together" (Rom.6:14-17 KJV).

When a person is transformed from the original human creation into the New Creation by the power of God's spirit, that person becomes a child of God in the Family of God.

The reason that God's spirit is a witness of a person being a child of God is that the spirit of God has merged with the human spirit, which produces the New Creature: a composite of the spirit of man and the spirit of God. Jesus Christ was one (the first) of these new creations before being resurrected to eternal life and immortality.

The Third Step

The day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. represents the third of four steps in the process of transforming a human from a lower physical life-form (Heb.2:5-8) into a higher spiritual life-form:

- First, the human egg is fertilized and God forms the spirit of man within it, which makes it human. See Zech.12:1.
- Second, the human is born and lives a physical life until God the Father presents the opportunity for salvation.
- Third, the human accepts God's call to salvation and becomes a son of God at the moment the holy spirit merges with the human spirit. See Acts 2:38; 3:19.
- During the fourth step, the son of God grows toward spiritual maturity until the change to a spirit-being. See 1.Cor.15:51-54; Eph.4:11-13; Heb.6:1-8; 12:23; Rev.3:5.

The Divine Nature

On the Day of Pentecost, through the Father's spirit-power, his new children were made partakers of his divine nature:

"Grace to you, and peace be multiplied by the full knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. As his divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of the One calling us through glory and virtue, by which means he has given to us the very great and precious promises, so that through these you might be partakers of the divine nature, escaping from the corruption in the world by lust" (2.Pet.1:3-4 Para.).

Revelation Through the Spirit

In addition to all the other events that occurred on this particular Festival Day, the Day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. was the day on which God began to reveal the understanding of the prophecies, mysteries, and time tables concerning his plan for the salvation of humanity.

Paul says that it is by the power of God's spirit that these hidden mysteries are revealed because this spirit has access to all knowledge. See 1.Cor.2:9-10; Dan.12:9-10.

1.Corinthians 2:11-14 KJV

"For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man within him? So also no one has known the things of God except the spirit of God. But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit from God; that we may know the things freely given to us by God. Which things we also speak, not in words taught in human wisdom, but in words taught of the holy spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things" (vs.11-13).

Paul reminds the Corinthians that they are not human as others are human, but they have been given the spirit of God. They are a new creation and have been given access to knowledge and understanding from God. This understanding includes God's plan for the salvation of humanity, who and what God is, and many other things pertaining to the spirit realm.

"But a natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (v14).

A human with only the spirit of man cannot receive or understand the things of God because they are of the original human creation. The elect of God, however, are not of the original creation; they are a new and different creation, which has both the spirit of man and the spirit of God combined to make a different creature.

Spirit Power Given

"You have seen these prophecies come true. And now I will send the holy spirit upon you, just as my Father promised. Don't begin telling others yet—stay here in the city until the holy spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven" (Lk.24:48-49 LBP).

"And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover" (Mk.16:17-18 KJV).

"But you shall receive power, after that the holy spirit is come upon you: and you shall witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8 KJV).

The Early Church

The Elect did go forth evangelizing and spreading the truth of God concerning the Kingdom of God and salvation. Their spiritual zeal literally changed the course of history (Mk.16:20). However, it was not in the plan of God to save the whole world during Jesus' lifetime nor during the apostolic era of the church. See Isa.6:8-10; Matt.10:34-36; 13:10-15; Mk.4:11-12; Lk.8:9-10.

Few people realize the awesome power that was placed in the hands of these early Christians on this Day of Pentecost, and few people understand the freedom with which these Christians were authorized to use this power. There are at least 21 distinct authorizations of spiritual and physical gifts noted in the New Testament that were given to the organized and unified Body of Christ. See our study paper on the spirit of God.

Each of these authorizations was to be used to build the early church into a powerful and dynamic force: *"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body"* (Eph.4:12-13 Para.). See also 1.Cor.12:8-10; 28-30; Rom.12:3-8; Eph.4:7-11.

There are many accounts in the New Testament of the Apostles and others using their powerful authorizations of spirit-power to perform their commission to preach the gospel of Christ and the Kingdom of God. See Acts 3:43; 5:1-15; 6:8; 13:8-11; 15:12.

The apostles and others performed miraculous works at their own discretion using the power given to them on the Day of Pentecost. However, as dynamic and powerful as the people were, they ceased to exist as a powerful organized entity.

After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and following the death of John, the organized preaching of the gospel on a powerful basis ceased as prophesied. See Jn.16:1-3.

The concentrated spiritual and physical power of the 'holy people' dissipated, which made an organized, powerful work impossible. From that time to now, there has been very little recorded about the true Elect of God. The only remaining records of them were those of their enemies.

Greater Power to Come

The great work that was begun on the day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. will be completed in the end of the age through this same spirit power. Only, this time, the power that is authorized will be unlimited:

"And I will also pour out my spirit on the slaves and on the slave-girls in those days. And I will give signs in the heavens, and in the earth: blood, and fire, and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord" (Joel 2:29-32 Para.).

Just before Jesus Christ returns, the dynamic power of the holy spirit will again be manifested through

the children of God (both men and women) as they complete their commission that began on the Festival of Pentecost in 30 A.D..

These are the elect who will have the ability to defy the very laws of the physical universe through the power of the holy spirit. No spiritual or physical power will be able to stop them from performing their God-given task until it is accomplished.

The Prophet Habbakkuk:

"Behold you among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for I will work a work in your days, you will not believe, though it were told" (Hab.1:5). See also verses 1-4.

The apostle Paul issued a prophetic warning to those of his day and those in the future in regard to Habakkuk's prophecy:

"Beware therefore, lest that come on you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, you despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you in no wise believe, though a man declare it to you" (Acts 13:40-41).

Jesus also spoke of a people who would use the power of the holy spirit in a greater way than he did:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he that believes on me, the works that I do he shall also do, and greater works than these he shall do; because I go to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the son. If you ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (Jn.14:12-14 Para.).

As powerful as the apostolic era of the church was, they did not do a greater work than Jesus. They did perform many great acts, miracles, and a powerful witness, but none were greater than the works of Jesus.

Just Before Christ Returns

Just before the return of Christ, the elect of God will do this greater work; they will do a greater work because they will have the kind of faith, power, and protection necessary to accomplish a greater work.

Who are These People?

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have a little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them to

come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you" (Rev.3:7-10 NIV).

These are the elect of God who will comprise the organized, unified, powerful Body of Christ at the very end of the age, and they will complete the commission that was given to those of the early church. Notice that Jesus grants them so much power that 'no one can stop them' from accomplishing their task.

They will perform such powerful works and be such a powerful witness that a great number of people will be converted and obtain salvation. Through the power of the holy spirit, this church will devastate the religions and governments of this world at the climactic end of human rule.

SUMMARY

The following three things distinguish the Day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. from all others before and since:

1. On this festival day, the spirit of the Sovereign Father, the spirit of Christ, and the Father's holy spirit were placed within those whom the Father chose to become the first sons of his new creation. See 1.Jn.14:9-11,23; 10:34-38; Lk.24:46-49.
2. The place where God chose to be worshiped was transferred from the Temple at Jerusalem to temples of flesh (Jn.4:19-20), which is evidenced by the tongues of fire and the miracle of languages for preaching the Father's good news message. Since this Pentecost, the earthly temple of God and the place where his presence has dwelled is within his children wherever they are on this earth. See 1.Cor.3:17; 6:19; 2.Cor.6:16.
3. The New Covenant was established (Jer.31:31-34; Heb.8:8-10).

By B. L. Cocherell, file b5w52 [Home](#)

WHERE THE NAME AND PRESENCE OF GOD RESIDES ON EARTH

On the Feast of Weeks in 30 A.D., a major event occurred concerning where the name and presence of God resides on earth. The subject of where God places his name and presence on earth is vitally important to everyone who seeks to worship and serve him, because the only place he can be worshiped is where his presence is.

In order to determine where God's name and presence is on earth today, it is important to review where he placed his name and presence from the time of Moses to the end of the first covenant with national Israel and where the Father promised to place his name and presence after the advent of Jesus Christ.

THE BURNING BUSH

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called him out of the midst of the bush, and said Moses, Moses. And he said, here am I. And he said draw not near here: put off your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground" (Ex.3:1-5 KJV).

When Moses first encountered God in the wilderness, God appeared to him in a fire and told him that the place where he stood was holy ground. As we will see, the fire of God is a very important key to unlocking the mystery of where God's presence resides on earth today.

This account shows that, when God places his power and presence on earth, this event is accompanied by fire that does not consume that which he has separated for his use. It also shows that, where God's presence resides is sacred and to be shown respect.

FIRE AND SMOKE ON MOUNT SINAI

Exodus 19:9-24

"Then he said to Moses, 'I am going to come to you in the form of a dark cloud, so that the people themselves can hear me when I talk with you, and they will always believe you. Go down now and see that the people are ready for my visit. Sanctify them today and tomorrow, and have them wash their clothes. Then the day after tomorrow, I will come down upon Mt. Sinai as all the people watch" (vs.9-11 LBP).

Moses was to prepare the people for the day when God would appear upon the mountain. One of the things that they were to do was to wash their clothing, which was a very important part of the preparation

prior to appearing before God.

"Set boundary lines the people may not pass, and tell them, 'Beware! Do not go up into the mountain or even touch its boundaries; whosoever does shall die" (v12 LPB).

"Not a hand shall touch him, but surely he shall be stoned, or surely he shall be shot through, he shall not live, whether animal or man" (v13 Para.).

In verses 12 and 13, we are told that neither animals nor the people could touch the mountain where God was going to be, and if they did touch it, they would be killed.

"All Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because Jehovah descended upon it in the form of fire; the smoke billowed into the sky as from a furnace, and the whole mountain shook with a violent earthquake" (v18 LBP).

There was a tremendous display of energy, fire, and smoke as the Creator God came to rest upon the mountain.

"So the Lord came down upon the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses up to the top of the mountain, and Moses ascended to God. But the Lord told Moses, 'Go back down and warn the people not to cross the boundaries. They shall not come up here to see God, for they will die" (vs.20-21 LBP).

God warns the people not to venture upon the sacred ground where he is:

"And let the priests which also come near the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them" (v22 KJV).

The priests must purify themselves in order to come close to the presence of God:

"But the people won't come up into the mountain!" Moses protested. "You told them not to!" You told me to set boundaries around the mountain, and to declare it off limits because it is reserved for God" (v23 LBP).

"And the Lord said to him, come, go down. And you and Aaron come up. And do not let the priests and the people break through and come up to the Lord, lest he burst forth among them" (v24 Para.).

At Mount Sinai, while God instructed Moses in how he wanted Israel to worship him he spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaking to a friend (Ex.33:11). Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel were to stay some distance away and worship (Ex.24:1), but the rest of Israel were to remain outside the sacred area:

"And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars according to the tribes of Israel. And sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. And he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people: and they said, all the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you concerning these words" (Ex.24:4-8 KJV).

After Moses came down from the mountain, he required that sacrifices be made to God, after which he sealed the covenant with the blood of these sacrifices.

"Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God and did eat and drink" (Ex.24:9-11 KJV).

Here, we see that the elders of Israel were also allowed to meet with the Creator God, after the proper sacrifices had been offered.

Verse 11 shows that no harm came to them while they were in the presence of God. But, what kept them from being killed by the power of God's presence? The reason they could come into the presence of God without being harmed is that they had prepared themselves through a purification process. They were free of all contamination and were purified through the offering of the proper sacrifices and acts of purification before going up the mountain to meet with God.

This account shows that, wherever God's power and presence resides is a sacred place. Moreover, nothing impure can come into contact with the power and presence of God without being destroyed by God's purity. Indeed, this was the case on Mount Sinai.

THE TABERNACLE

While the Creator God resided upon Mount Sinai, he instructed Moses to have the tabernacle built so that he could dwell among the nation of Israel and provide a place for them to worship him:

"And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and made the alter, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. then the cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and the fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys" (Ex.40:33-35, 38 KJV).

After the tabernacle was erected and all of God's instructions had been followed concerning its preparation, God moved his presence from Mount Sinai to the tabernacle. Again, God's presence is

evidenced by fire.

Preparation and Purification

Leviticus chapters 8 and 9 show that preparation and purification of the priesthood was necessary in order for them to serve God in the Tabernacle. This indicates that everything used in the service of God and in the place where his presence resides must be clean, pure, and sinless. Please read both chapters 8 and 9 in order to gain an understanding of the importance that God places on the purification process.

God gave great detail to Moses and Aaron concerning how the priesthood and all other things should be prepared and purified before they could come into his presence. He warned that, if these procedures were not followed, the violator would be killed. It is important to remember that nothing impure or sinful can abide in the presence of God.

A Fatal Mistake

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took their censor, and put fire in it; and they put incense on it and brought strange fire before the Lord God, which he had not commanded them. And fire went out before the Lord God and consumed them; and they died before the Lord God" (Lev.10:1-2 Para.).

The two sons of Aaron did not take the instruction that God gave them about keeping all contamination out of his presence seriously. Because they did not heed these instructions, they were killed by the fire of God's presence.

The Holy of Holies

Leviticus 16:1-4 GNB

"The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who were killed when they offered unholy fire to the Lord. He said, 'Tell your brother Aaron that only at the proper time is he to go behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place, because that is where I appear in a cloud above the lid on the Covenant Box (i.e., the mercy seat)'" (vs.1-2).

Within the most sacred place of the tabernacle was the ark of the covenant, and within it were the following things:

- The two tables of stone on which God wrote the Ten Commandments. See Ex.25:10-22
- Aaron's rod, which was a symbol of his office as the high priest of God. See Num.17:10
- A small amount of manna, which was the food that God provided daily for the Israelites as they traveled in the wilderness. See Heb.9:4

"If he disobeys, he will be killed. He may enter the Most Holy Place only after he has brought a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.' Then the Lord gave the following instructions, 'Before Aaron goes into the Most Holy Place, he must take a bath and put on the priestly garments: the linen robe and shorts, the belt, and the turban" (vs.3-4).

Although others of the priesthood could officiate in various duties within the tabernacle, only Aaron could come within the Holy of Holies where the presence of God resided upon the ark of the covenant. Moreover, Aaron had to make special preparations to remove all contamination from himself prior to entering this most sacred of places. If Aaron did not follow these instructions in exact detail, he would have been killed as his two sons were when they failed to properly prepare to come before the presence of God.

The tabernacle was the place where God met with Moses and the priesthood. This was the only place where God would accept sacrifices and allow offerings to be made to him. It was also the only place where an Israelite could go before God to ask for their sins to be forgiven. See Ex.29:42-43; 30:6;36.

The Place in the Promised Land

After instructing the Israelites on how to worship him, God told them to destroy all of the pagan places of worship in the land he was going to give them. Then, he said that they should not attempt to worship him in the ways that the pagans worshiped their gods and they had to worship him where he placed his name and presence:

"You must not worship the lord your God in their way. But you are to seek the place the lord your God will choose from among your tribes to put his name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the first born of your herds and flocks. There, in the presence of the Lord your God you and your families shall eat and rejoice . . ." (Deut.12:4-7 NIV).

AT SHILOH

After wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, the Israelites entered into the promised land and set the tabernacle up at Shiloh as directed by God:

"And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them" (Josh.18:1 KJV).

The prophet Jeremiah also records that Shiloh was the first place in the promised land where God chose to place his name and presence:

"But go you now to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to

it for the wickedness of my people Israel" (Jer.7:12 KJV).

The tabernacle resided at Shiloh for about 300 years. During this time, the Israelites stopped diligently worshiping God. As punishment for their sins, God allowed the Philistines to invade Israel and capture the ark of God. The Philistines took the ark and placed it in the temple of Dagon for a short period of time (1.Sam.5:1-11) after which, it was returned to Israel where it remained at the house of Abinadab until it was moved to the city of David and later to the temple that Solomon built.

The Temple at Jerusalem

"Now my God, I beseech you, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place; and now O Lord God, rise to your rest; You and the ark of your strength; O Lord God your priest are clothed with salvation, and your saints rejoice in goodness; O Lord God, do not turn away the face of your anointed; remember the good deeds of your servant David" (2.Chron.6:40-42 Para.).

"And when Solomon finished praying, then the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of Lord God filled the house; and the priests were not able to go into the house of the Lord God, because of the glory of Lord God had filled the house of Lord God and all the sons of Israel were watching, when the fire came down, and the glory of Lord God was on the house" (2.Chron.6:7:1-3 Para.).

Approximately 480 years after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, God moved his dwelling place into the Temple at Jerusalem. Again, the fire of God descended upon the place where the presence of God was to reside. This fire is also evidence that God had moved the place where he intends to reside and be worshiped. God's presence remained in Jerusalem for approximately 1,000 years until the temple that Herod built was destroyed in 70 A.D.

WHERE DOES GOD DWELL TODAY?

Because the temple at Jerusalem where God's presence resided was destroyed, it is pertinent to ask if there is a place on earth where the presence of God resides today, and if there is such a place, where is it?

After Christ Came

The Bible tells us that, after the advent of Christ, salvation would be offered to people throughout the world:

"In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as the days of old. That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the heathen, which are called by my name, says the Lord that does this" (Amos 9:11-12 KJV). See also Psa.22:27-29, 67:1-7; 72:1-17; Matt.28:18-20; Lk.24:46-47; Acts 10:1-48; 15:15-17.

The Father knew that it would be impossible for those who were scattered throughout the world to come to one specific location on earth to worship him; therefore, a change would be necessary. Thus, God made it possible for those whom he would call to salvation to worship him wherever they were on earth.

Spiritual Worship

While speaking to a woman of Samaria, Jesus explained that there would come a time when the existing worship system would be abolished, and those who worshiped God would do so in spirit and truth. He explained that it would no longer be necessary to travel to a specific location to worship God.

"The woman said to him, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where it is necessary to worship. Jesus said to her, Woman believe me that an hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews" (Jn.4:19-22 Para.).

In verses 23-24, Jesus says that God the Father is a spirit-being who can only be worshiped in spirit and truth:

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For the Father seeks such ones that worship him. God is a spirit, and the ones that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn.4:23-24 Para.).

Many people believe that when Jesus spoke of worshiping in the spirit and truth, he was only speaking philosophically, and that he was only trying to convey that people would eventually worship God with a different attitude. However, Jesus was saying something completely different. He was speaking of the time when the Father would move his place of worship from the temple in Jerusalem to a temple of flesh, where his spirit would reside. See our study paper concerning the New Creation for more details about worshiping in the spirit.

In writing to the Philipians, the apostle Paul says it is the sons of God who worship the Father in spirit and it is through the holy spirit of God that the children of God worship the Father:

"For the rest, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is not truly tiresome to me, but safe for you. Look out for the dogs; look out for the evil workers; look out for the concision party (i.e., the Jews). For we are the circumcision who worship by the spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who do not trust in the flesh" (Phil.3:1-3 Para.). Also see Eph.6:18; Gal.6:1-2.

THE FESTIVAL OF PENTECOST AND THE NEW TEMPLE

"And he said, Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again from the dead on the third day; and that this message of salvation should be taken from Jerusalem to all the nations; There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me. You have seen these prophecies come true. And now I will send the holy spirit upon you, just as my Father promised. Don't begin telling others yet—stay here in the city until the holy spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven" (Lk.24:46-49 LBP).

Here, we see Jesus preparing his disciples for the moment that the Father would place his holy spirit within them and they would become the dwelling place of his presence. This is the hour Jesus spoke of when he told the woman of Samaria that the hour would come when the Father's place of worship would be changed.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:1-3 KJV).

This is the same kind of fire that was present when Moses met God at the burning bush. Additionally, it is this kind of fire that descended upon Mount Sinai, upon the tabernacle, and upon the temple Solomon built in order to show that God had placed his name and presence there.

Just as the fire descended upon the tabernacle and the temple that Solomon built, as the fire of God descended upon God's people of the New Covenant on this festival of Pentecost, the Father placed his name and presence in a new Temple where he could meet with his people.

The following things distinguish this Day of Pentecost from any others since:

- The place where God chose to be worshiped was being transferred from the temple at Jerusalem to a temple of flesh.
- The New Covenant had been established (Jer.31:31-34; Heb.8:8-10), and the Father had moved the place where he would meet with his people.
- The descending of the heavenly fire and the other things that occurred on that day were all evidence that the presence of God is now inhabiting a human temple.
- God the Father poured out his holy spirit upon those he had chosen to receive it, which caused the earthly temple of God and the place where his presence dwells to be within his children wherever they are on this earth.

Historical Review

When the servant Stephen was brought before the high priest and accused of blasphemy, he reviewed the history of Israel and revealed that God had moved his dwelling place on earth to a temple of flesh.

Acts 7:44-51 NIV

Stephen reminds them that the tabernacle was God's first dwelling place with Israel:

"Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them" (vs.44-45).

In verses 46-47, Stephen speaks of the great temple that Solomon constructed for God to place his presence within:

"It remained in the land until the time of David, who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built the house for him" (vs.46-47).

"However the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things?" (vs.48-50). Also see Acts 17:24-25; Isa.66:1-2; Psa.11:4.

Stephen understood that the temple was an object of worship to many of the people who stood there, and he reminded them that God cannot be captured and held in a house built by men, because God is greater than all man-made objects. What Stephen said was considered blasphemy to those who thought of the temple as indispensable to their worship of God:

"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the holy spirit!" (v51).

Those to whom Stephen spoke had forgotten the Creator's promise of a new covenant with Israel in which he promised to move his dwelling place (his Holy Place) into a temple of flesh (Jer.31:31-34). Because of their spiritual blindness and attachment to the temple and its worship system, they killed Stephen, not realizing that he had revealed to them one of the most profound and wonderful truths of their age. See Psa.37:30-31; Jer.32:40.

Purification of the Temple

Under the Old Covenant, the priesthood, the people, and all things that came into close contact with God had to be purified and kept clean, because God will not dwell where there is sin (Lev.19:2; 1.Pet.1:15-16) or physical impurity (Ex.29:36-46; Deut.23:14).

Many people do not realize that God has not changed and that, under the New Covenant, he still requires all things that come into close contact with him to be free from all sin and impurity. This is why it is vitally important to become and remain sinless and pure through the blood of Christ. See Mal.3:6; Heb.9:22-28.

The Temple of Flesh

"And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (2.Cor.6:16-18 LBP).

Because God will not allow his spirit to inhabit an impure place, a physical and a spiritual change takes place during the baptismal ceremony. In the baptismal water, the Father purifies the physical body through his spirit power so that his holy spirit (his spirit presence) can dwell within the repentant believer's physical body. See 1.Tim.5:22; Tit.1:15-16; Heb.10:14-22, 1.Pet.1:22; 1.Jn.3:1-3; 4:4.

"Haven't you yet learned that your body is the home of the holy spirit God gave you, and that he lives within you? Your own body does not belong to you. For God has bought you with a great price. So use every part of your body to give glory back to God, because he owns it" (1.Cor.6:19-20 LPB).

"Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and the spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple" (1.Cor.3:16-17 NIV).

"Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; In whom all the building fitly framed together grows into a holy temple in the lord: In whom you are also built together for an habitation of God through the spirit" (Eph.2:19-22).

The writings of the apostles leave no doubt that the physical body of a child of God is a temple of God; it is the sacred place where The holy spirit dwells.

The Indwelling of the Spirit

"No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love having been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him, and he in us, because of his spirit he has given to us" (Jn.4:12-13 Para.). See Lk.24:46-49; Acts 5:32.

There are a number of very important things to note from what John says:

- The Father resides within his children
- God's love is perfected in his Children
- God's spirit is evidence of sonship in the Family of God

SUMMARY

While the temple existed in Jerusalem and was attended by the priesthood, anyone who wanted to perform certain acts of worship could do so at Jerusalem. However, after the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., there was no place for the priesthood to officiate or sacrifices to be offered:

"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he says, A new covenant, he has made the first old, Now that which decays and waxes old, is ready to vanish away" (Heb.8:12-13 KJV).

When the last vestige of the presence of God's spirit left the temple just before its destruction, what remained of the system of worship that God gave to national Israel has been suspended until Christ returns to establish a new temple system under the Kingdom of God. Until this event occurs, the only place that the presence of God dwells is within the children of God.

The Biblical record clearly shows that the Father has moved the place where he has chosen to place his presence three times:

1. From Mount Sinai to the tabernacle
2. From the tabernacle to the temple
3. From the temple to the children of his new creation

Each of these moves was preceded by fire that came out of heaven and rested upon the place where he was going to place his presence.

The Holy of Holies

Within the heart of the tabernacle and later the temple, was the Holy of Holies where the high priest met with God once a year on the Day of Atonement. In this most sacred place was the ark of the covenant where the presence of God rested. The ark of the covenant contained the ten commandments written in stone by the finger of God, Aaron's rod, which signified his authorization to meet with God and intercede for the people of Israel, and some of the food (manna) God gave from heaven to sustain the Israelites as they traveled in the wilderness.

Today, the Father's name rests upon his children and his presence dwells within their flesh through the

power of his holy spirit. All who have the name and presence of the Father dwelling within them are a temple of God on earth. Within this temple of flesh, the law of God is written in the hearts of his children. As long as they live within this temple of flesh, they have the authority to communicate, serve, and worship the Father wherever they are and receive daily spiritual nourishment to sustain them as they journey through life.

Within the children of God is the most holy place on earth: it is where the spirit of God resides and where God the Father and Jesus Christ meet with those who are called to salvation.

The Place of Worship

Now God's temple and his Holy Place are within his chosen people (the elect of God) and no matter where they are on this earth, they can meet with the Father and Jesus Christ. A worshiper of God no longer has to go to the temple to offer sacrifices or to observe annual festival days or other observances. All of God's festivals and observances can be observed anywhere one of his children is or wherever they gather to fellowship and worship him.

The Day of Pentecost has many important meanings for a Christian today. However, perhaps the most inspiring meaning is the fact that God the Father has moved the dwelling place of his presence into his children.

By B. L. Cocherell, file b5w53 [Home](#)

A DAY OF BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

The central theme of the Feast of Weeks is beginnings. These beginnings have to do with the start of events that radically alter the social, political and religious lives of those whom God is directly dealing with in conjunction with his plan for the salvation of humanity.

At Mount Sinai

Many Biblical Scholars and Jewish Historians believe that God gave the law from Mount Sinai to the Israelites on the Feast of Weeks. Others believe that the Feast of Weeks was the day on which God made, ratified, and sealed his covenant with Israel. There is also a belief that this was the day when the Israelite's Egyptian slavery officially ended. Although there are no scriptures that directly support any of these claims, all of these beliefs would easily fit within the symbolic meaning of the Feast of Weeks.

In support of the above beliefs, Exodus 19:1 does say that Israel arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai on the 1st day of the 3rd month. If we assume that it took Moses one day to go up Mount Sinai, speak to God, and come back down (Ex.19:3-8), and we add the three day wait for God to appear on the mountain (Ex.19:9-19) and one day for Moses and the priest to go back up the mountain and return, we have a total of five days. Thus, Moses would have returned from the mountain with the law of God on the 6th or 7th day of the third month.

Using the shortest and longest lunar months, the earliest the Feast of Weeks could have occurred would have been the 7th day of the 3rd month and at the latest, the eleventh day. Therefore, using the most conservative or the most liberal calculations for determining the Feast of Weeks, the feast could very well fit within this time period and there would have been plenty of time for God to have given the commandment and the law, which the people had already agreed to keep (Ex.19:8).

An Ending and Beginning of Covenants

Whether or not the law was given on the Feast of Weeks, as many believe, there is no doubt that 50 days after the Lift Offering of barley in 30 A.D., the original laws concerning how to be justified before God the Father were superseded by those of the New Covenant.

One of the major prophecies concerning the Feast of Pentecost has to do with the ending of the first covenant with national Israel and the beginning of the New Covenant. In order to understand the significance of the ending of the first covenant, it is necessary to review the major events surrounding its making, its primary terms and conditions, and its prophetic symbolism in relation to the New Covenant.

The Covenant With National Israel

The following are a number of significant events surrounding the making of the first covenant with

national Israel:

- God chose the Israelites to become his sons.
- The sacrifice of a lamb was necessary to cover their sins.
- They were spared from death because of their obedience.
- They were freed from slavery through the power of God.
- They departed Egypt into a new land through the Red Sea.

The Covenant Proposal

After God brought the People of Israel to his holy mountain, he offered them a covenant through which they would reap tremendous benefits:

"Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. . . . And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord has spoken we will do. . ." (Ex.19:5-8 KJV).

The Israelites were to become God's treasure, his priests and his holy people. This offer of a national covenant with the Creator God had never before been made to any other people. Not only were they to have God's blessings above all other people but also they were to represent God to the world as a nation of priests who were sacred to God.

"And he [Moses], took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words" (Ex.24:7-8 KJV).

Here, the people formally agreed to do anything God might ask them to do, which also implies that they were willing to do God's will at that time and in the future. When God added something to the covenant, the people would always affirm that they agreed to what was added and that they would obey.

Terms and Conditions

1. God would give the Israelites his laws by which to live their lives.
2. The Israelites would obey whatever the Eternal asked them to do.
3. God would formally make the nation of Israel his people—his treasured possession.
4. Each Israelite would represent God's system of worship and way of life to the world.

5. The people would be sacred (i.e., have a divine quality)
6. The agreement's continuation was predicated on the Israelite's continued obedience.
7. It was a blood covenant, which was ratified and sealed with the blood of an animal sacrifice.

The Covenant is Broken

The covenant that God made with the people of Israel was a wonderful covenant because it could be kept by all of Israel. However, it was not kept and was repeatedly broken until God severed his covenant relationship with national Israel because of their continual disobedience.

The Promise of a New Covenant

"Behold the days come, says the Lord, that I will cut a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I cut with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—which covenant of mine they broke, although I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will cut with the house of Israel: After those days, declares the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer.31:31-33 Para.).

Those whom God had made the original contract with are all dead along with millions of their descendants who died without a new covenant. The Israel of the original covenant is not a nation under the rule of God today; her peoples are now scattered throughout the earth.

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezk.36:26-27 KJV).

Although these prophecies in Jeremiah and Ezekiel are for National Israel after the return of Christ, they also pertain to the elect of God (spiritual Israel) before Christ's return, according to the writer of Hebrews:

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be a God to them, and they shall be a people to me" (Heb.8:10 Para.). See chapters 8 and 9 of Hebrews.

The New Covenant

Remember that the Law of God that was given at Mount Sinai was written both on tables of stone and in a book. Moreover, in giving a promise of a New Covenant, the Creator God who became Jesus Christ

foretold the time when God the Father, through the power of his spirit, would place his righteous law within the minds and hearts of those he chooses to be his sons:

"Forasmuch as you are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart" (2.Cor.3:3 KJV). See Ex.24:12; 32:15; 34:1.

When one receives the holy spirit, the laws of God are made a part of one's very nature and being, which makes it possible to be continually conscious of the difference between righteous and unrighteous concepts and behavior. Having these laws as a constant part of the consciousness alerts a child of God to the right spiritual path that should be followed as they experience life with its various trials and temptations.

The Day of Sabbaths

There are a number of very important events noted in the New Testament that happened on the Day of Pentecost, which would have gone unnoticed, if it were not for the specific use of the phrase *"on the day of the Sabbaths."* The word used in this phrase is *shabbaton*, which is not a Greek word; it is the Hebrew word that is used to describe an annual festival day.

Besides the word itself, there are two other clues which reveal that it is the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) which is being spoken of in the texts where this phrase "on the day of the Sabbaths" is used:

1. The writer specifically uses the plural of 'shabbaton' to indicate that the day is a culmination of a number of weekly cycles. This plural use clearly separates this day from the observance of the weekly Sabbath.
2. The context of the texts concerns the beginning and ending of a significant event in the plan of God for the salvation of humanity.

Now let us review a number of important events from the following list that occurred on the Day of Pentecost:

- The beginning of Jesus' formal ministry.
- The beginning of a number of the Apostle Paul's evangelistic missions.
- Paul's stay in Ephesus documents Pentecost observance by the early church.
- Pentecost in 66 A.D. foretells the destruction of Jerusalem.

Did Jesus' Formal Ministry Begins on Pentecost?

"And he came to Nazareth, where he was brought up. And he went in, as was his custom, on the day of Sabbaths, into the synagogue, and stood up to read . . . He found the place where it was written: The

spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to captives, and new sight to the blind; to send away crushed ones in deliverance; to preach an acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk.4:16-19 Para.).

This event seems to be the formal announcement of the beginning of Christ's ministry and the beginning of the end of the high priest's function within the sacrificial system as the bridge builder and intercessor between God and man.

Note:

Although the phrase 'on the day of Sabbaths' seems to indicate that this day may have also been the Feast of Weeks, there are no scriptures to support this assumption; however, it is a possibility considering how the sacred calendar is structured and the Calendar Court's authority to administer it.

The Ministry of Paul

Acts 16:6-10,13 Paraphrased

"When Paul, Timothy, and others decided to go from Galatia toward Asia, being forbidden by the spirit to go any further, they decided to go north into Bithynia, the spirit again forbid them to go in that direction. Traveling on they arrived at the port city of Troas. While in Toras, Paul received a vision that instructed him to go to Macedonia; therefore, he and the small band of people with him immediately departed for Macedonia" (vs.6-10).

Arriving in Philipi, they stayed a few days, but apparently they did not try to evangelize the population until the day of Pentecost:

"And on the day of the Sabbaths [the Day of Pentecost], we went outside the city beside a river, where it was customary for prayers to be made" (v13).

Beside the river, they began to preach to the women and they met a woman named Lydia whom God called to salvation along with the rest of her household.

The significance of this event is that this Day of Pentecost was the beginning of Paul's effort to preach the gospel to Europe—a new beginning. It is interesting that, in his letter to the Philippians, Paul specifically calls this event *"the beginning of the gospel"* (Phil.4:15). See also 2.Cor.2:12.

In his letter to those at Corinth, Paul says that he remained at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door had been opened to him to declare the Gospel:

"For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened to me, and there are

many adversaries" (1.Cor.16-7-9 KJV).

In this passage, there is yet another reference made by Paul about Pentecost. Why did Paul want to wait at Ephesus until Pentecost? First, Paul was accustomed to keeping Pentecost. Moreover, since he was about to embark on an evangelical campaign; therefore, perhaps he wanted to observe this Feast Day with the elect of God at Ephesus to seek their counsel and support. Whatever the reason was for Paul wanting to stay at Ephesus until Pentecost, the fact remains that this particular Pentecost marked the ending of one phase of Paul's work and the beginning of another even greater work.

Paul also formally began his ministry to the area of Galatia in the city of Antioch-Pisidia on the Day of Pentecost. See Acts 13:13:15.

The Early Church

"For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: therefore he hurried so that if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost" (Acts 20:16 Para.).

Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem for Pentecost. Why? To understand why he wanted to be there at this particular time, we must analyze the passage more closely. Notice the words 'to' and 'be'. If we take these words at face value, this verse would seem to say that Paul just wanted to be there on Pentecost. But, this is not the case at all. The Greek word that is translated into two separate English words 'to' and 'be' can also be translated 'celebrate' (The New Testament according to the Eastern texts by George M. Lamsa). With the correct word inserted into Acts 20:16, it is easy to understand why Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem. The fact is, Paul wanted to be in Jerusalem to celebrate the Day of Pentecost—a day that is an annual festival day commanded by God to be observed.

The Temple, 66 A.D.

The Jewish historian Josephus recorded several dramatic witnesses and events that concerned the temple worship system at Jerusalem (War, Book 6. ch.5.). Some of these witnesses and events foretold the end of the temple worship system at Jerusalem, and other events that are recorded show the events that brought it to an end. The following are just four of the witnesses and events recorded by Josephus:

- During the Feast of Unleavened Bread in 66 A.D., a heifer being led for sacrifice was said to have given birth to a lamb in the midst of the temple. Around midnight, the huge temple gates which normally took twenty men to open, opened by themselves.
- Later, on the twenty first of Jyar, just before sunset, chariots and soldiers in armor were seen running about in the clouds around the city. See Lk.21:20.
- During the night portion of the day of Pentecost in 66 A.D., as the priests were entering the inner court of the temple, they felt a quaking and heard a great noise and a sound like a great multitude of voices saying, "Let us remove hence".
- Jewish historical records state that the shekinah glory departed the temple at that time and

remained over the mount of olives for three and a half years, during which time, a voice could sometimes be heard coming from the mount pleading for the Jews to repent. See Midrash Lamentations 2:11.

The Jews failed to heed this warning that began 3 ½ years earlier, on the Day of Pentecost. It is said that just before the Roman's final siege of Jerusalem that this light, which appeared over the Mount of Olives, disappeared into the heavens.

If indeed the nation of Israel began its covenant relationship on the day of Pentecost at the foot of Mount Sinai, it ended this relationship on the day of Pentecost in 66 A. D..

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF PENTECOST OBSERVANCE

In his book Christian Feasts And Customs, a Catholic writer Frances Weiser writes, "Pentecost was held annually from a very early date . . . Pentecost must have naturally suggested itself as a complementary festival (to the Passover), commemorating the fulfillment and fruit of Christ's redemptive task and of His resurrection . . ." (p.248).

The oldest secular writings we have concerning the celebration of Pentecost, outside of the New Testament is from the 2nd century (100-200 A.D.). The Catholic Encyclopedia states, "The first mention of a Christian Pentecost is found in the 'epistola Apostolorum' of the mid 2nd century. . ." ('Pentecost,' Vol. 11, p. 109).

In the 3rd century, Origenes and Tertullian spoke of Pentecost as a GREAT feast—the latter mentioned it as a well-established Christian feast. Bishop Eusebius (339 A.D.) called it "all blessed and all holy, the feast of feasts." In his sermons on the Feast of Pentecost, John Chrysostom (407 A.D.) used phrases such as the following:

"Today we have arrived at the peak of all blessings." "We have reached the capital of feasts." "We have obtained the very fruit of our Lord's promise." History shows that the festival day of Pentecost was always observed by the early Christians (Weiser, p.248).

SUMMARY

The Feast of Pentecost contains many meanings; therefore, it is no accident that tremendous events have and will transpire on this day. This day truly pictures many beginnings and endings that are extremely important to the plan and purpose of God for humanity.

Although most of the symbolic meanings and prophetic events of this day have been fulfilled, there are still three major events that must come to pass as an integral part of this day prior to the return of Christ to establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth:

Spiritual Power

The great power that the early church was given on the Day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. will be given to God's people again. Only this time, the power that is given will be unlimited in order for the great work that began on Pentecost 30 A.D. to be completed. The giving of this spirit-power will mark the beginning of the end of human rule on earth. See Joel 2:29-32; Hab.1:1-5; Acts 13:40-41; Jn.14:12-14; Rev.3:7-10.

The First Resurrection

The resurrection of the righteous dead who have been justified and saved from eternal death through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ will happen on a Pentecost.

The Transformation

The transformation of all righteous individuals (both the resurrected and the living) into immortal beings as a part of the Family and Kingdom of God will likely occur on a Pentecost.

All of the above events will complete the symbolic and prophetic meanings and events of the Feast of Pentecost and will begin a new era for humanity under the rule of the righteous Kingdom of God.

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PENTECOST, THE DAY JESUS RETURNS

One of the most misunderstood topics of the Bible is the return of Christ. Most people do not begin to comprehend the magnitude of the events which will surround this climactic event, and they do not understand its importance in the overall plan of God for the future of humanity. The first resurrection will undoubtedly be one of the most awesome and glorious events to ever take place on the Day of Pentecost.

Several climactic, earth-shaking events will happen the day that Jesus returns to the earth. The following are four of these major events, which directly concern the elect of God:

1. The resurrection to immortality of the elect who have died.
2. The change to immortality of the elect who are alive.
3. Rewarding the righteous for diligent effort and sacrifice.
4. The seven last plagues will be set in motion.

Jesus Appears in the Sky

As a great trumpet blast resounds through the earth, Jesus will enter the earth's atmosphere and light the sky with his glory, and the angels will begin to collect the righteous of all ages:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt.24:29-31 KJV). See also Isa.43:5-7; Mk.13:24-27; 14:62; Rev.1:7; 8:12.

The Dead Rise First

In this great day, all those who have obtained salvation will rise to meet Jesus as he enters the atmosphere. All of the righteous who have died over the centuries will be resurrected and join him before those who are alive at his coming:

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1.Thes.4:16-17 KJV). See also 1.Cor.15:51-54; 1.Thes.4:13-15; 2.Thes.2:1-8.

THE BETTER RESURRECTION

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb.11:33-35 KJV).

Is one resurrection better than another? When we review the rewards and opportunities that are offered to those who will participate in the first resurrection, it can be seen that, the first resurrection is far better than the others.

The entire eleventh chapter of Hebrews chronicles the lives of many righteous individuals who lived and died in obedience to God. Verse 35 states that these people obeyed God in order to obtain a better resurrection.

Although many of these righteous individuals suffered much adversity in order to obtain a better resurrection, they remained dead at the time of Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost 30 A.D. (Acts 2:24-39). Therefore, they had not yet received their better resurrection.

"And having obtained witness through faith, these did not obtain the promise, God having foreseen something better concerning us, that they should not be perfected apart from us" (Heb.11:39-40 Para.). See also Heb.11:13; 1.Cor.15:51-54; 1.Thes.4:13-15.

The scriptures tell us that the transformation to perfection will occur during the time of the first resurrection. In verses 39-40 of Hebrews chapter 11, the writer refers to the sacrifice of Christ through whom all (including those who lived before Christ) are justified and made worthy of immortality. The reason why these righteous individuals have not been perfected (i.e., made immortal) is that all of the elect will be perfected (made immortal) at the same time.

PENTECOST AND THE FIRST RESURRECTION

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. this is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev.20:4-6 KJV).

These verses describe individuals who witnessed of Jesus and were obedient to God's word, and some of them will be alive just before the end of this age and the return of Jesus Christ. Because of their performance under extremely difficult circumstances, this group of individuals will receive a great

reward in the first resurrection—the better resurrection.

Editors Note:

Obviously, if there is a first resurrection, there must also be a second. For details of the four major resurrections after the return of Christ, see our study paper on the resurrections.

PENTECOST AND THE LIFT OFFERINGS

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1.Cor.15:19-23 KJV). See also Col.1:13-18.

The parallels between the lift offering of the barley harvest during the feast of Unleavened Bread and the lift offering of Pentecost are undeniable.

Just as the lift offering of barley was prophetic of Jesus Christ who would be accepted by the Father as the first-fruits of humanity to become his spirit-son and ascend into heaven on the day of the barley lift offering in 30 A.D., the lift offering of the two loaves of wheat bread offered on the day of Pentecost is prophetic of the first resurrection. On the first resurrection, which will occur on the Day of Pentecost, the elect of God of all ages will be accepted of the Father as his spirit-sons and will ascend into heaven.

In verses 19-23, Paul speaks of the hope we have in Christ through the resurrection of the dead. Christ is the first to be resurrected, which is symbolized by the Lift Offering of the barley harvest. And those who are saved through his sacrifice will be the next to be resurrected, which is symbolized by the two loaves of wheat bread offered on the Feast of Weeks.

What Paul reveals in these scriptures is truly astounding. To become a son of God and a brother of Jesus is a tremendous reward with truly awesome implications.

The scriptures clearly show that Jesus was the first of humanity to be resurrected as an immortal being and a son of God. Those who will be resurrected at his coming are also considered to be the first of humanity to receive sonship in the Family of God. See Heb.2:10-11.

THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORN

The church of the first-born is composed of all those whom the Father has called to salvation from the time of Adam to the return of Christ. These are the people who will participate in the first resurrection at the coming of Christ. They are the righteous of all ages who have qualified during this lifetime to become the first-born sons of God the Father's new creation. The following are several texts that speak of

the individuals who will be perfected on the Day of Pentecost during the first resurrection:

"But you have drawn near to Mount Zion, even the city of the living God, to a heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, and to an assembly, a church of the first-born ones having been enrolled in heaven; and to God the judge of all; and to the spirits of just ones who have been perfected"

(Heb.12:22-23 Para.). See also Jms.1:16-18.

"Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures"

(Jms.1:16-18 KJV).

"And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion! And with him a hundred an forty four thousands having the name of his Father written on their foreheads. . . These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones following the Lamb wherever he may go. These were redeemed from among men as first-fruit to God and to the Lamb" (Rev.14:1, 4 Para).

These verses reveal a very select group of the elect who are noted as being among the first who are called of the Father to obtain salvation.

Predestined To Sonship

The people who participate in the first resurrection have been predestined from the foundation of the earth to become the first sons of God—the first-fruits of the harvest. The books of Titus and Romans reveal that at least some of the first-fruits (the elect) were chosen to participate in the first resurrection before the earth was formed:

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Tit.1:1-2 KJV). Also see ch.3:7; 1.Thes.5:8.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom.8:29 KJV). See also 2.Cor.6:17-18; Jn.1:12; 3:1-3; Rom.8:8, and our study paper concerning the subject of predestination.

PENTECOST A DAY OF REWARDS

"Behold I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Rev.22:12 NIV).

"Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully" (2.Jn.8 NIV).

"And the nations were angry, and your wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that you should give reward unto your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear your name, small and great;. . ." (Rev.11:18 KJV).

The apostles knew that, besides being given immortality, which was beyond any human's ability to earn, in that great day when Jesus returns to gather the elect of God, the righteous would also receive rewards for their performance above and beyond their call to salvation.

THE REWARDS

Believe it or not, the reward for being righteous is not to float aimlessly around heaven playing harp music for eternity. There is something far more spectacular than this in store for those who will be in the first resurrection:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1.Pet.1:3-4 KJV). See also Acts 23:6; 24:15; Tit.1:2.

It is difficult to list all the rewards that will be given to the elect of God, and it is even more difficult to list them in an order of importance because they are all so magnificent and reach far into the future beyond the return of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

BECOME A SON OF GOD

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (2.Cor.6:17-18 KJV). See also Jn.1:12; 3:1-3; Rom.8:18, 29; Phil.3:21; Heb.2:10-11.

It is important to understand what is being said here: Rewards are only given to those who separate themselves from this world's evil and live a righteous life. However, many people believe that even if they do gain eternal life, they will be doomed to some meaningless existence. This assumption could not be farther from the truth:

"But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him" (1.Cor.2:9 KJV).

"You will make me to know the way of life. In your presence are fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forever" (Psa.16:11 Para.).

The following is a list of some of the rewards those in the first resurrection will be given for successfully living a righteousness life:

- Immortality
- Joint-inheritance with Christ
- Inheritance of all things
- Inheritance of the earth
- Inheritance of the Kingdom of God
- Co-rulership with Christ
- Being a king and a priest

IMMORTALITY

"Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power" (Rev.20:6 Para.).

Those who participate in the first resurrection have escaped the punishment reserved for the wicked and are promised that they will live forever as immortal beings:

"He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches; He that overcomes will not be hurt of the second death" (Rev.2:11 Para).

The gift that God offers to those he calls to salvation is not just eternal life, it is much more. The angels have eternal life and are sustained by God's life giving power yet they can be destroyed if they disobey God. The life God offers to the Elect is immortal life, which can never be destroyed. Those in the first resurrection will be immortal like God the Father and Jesus Christ are.

The quality of life that the righteous are promised is comparable to the kind of life that God himself has. God is a spirit-being who inherently possesses the highest form of life, which is immortality on the divine plane of existence. This kind of life springs forth from itself; it is not dependent upon any other source to sustain it because it is self sustaining:

"Behold I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1.Cor.15:51-54 KJV). See also Rom.2:7; 6:1-5; 1.Tim.1:17; 6:12-16; 2.Tim.1:9-10; 2.Pet.1:4; Rev.20:6.

It is this quality of life called immortality that God grants to those who participate in the first resurrection. The acquisition of immortality and eternal life allows the elect to pass beyond this

physical existence into the Family of God.

It is abundantly clear that God intends to share immortality with those he has called to the first resurrection. Immortality is the highest reward for faithfulness to God. See Lk.18:29-30; 20:34-35; Rom.6:23; 2:6-7; 1.Tim.6:12; 1.Jn.2:25; Tit.3:7.

With immortality, the righteous will also receive a glorified body, that will radiate with the brightness of the stars:

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan.12:3 KJV).

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature [immortality and godly character]. . ." (2.Pet.1:4 KJV). See also Rom.6:1-5; Phil.3:21; 1.Jn.3:2.

Although immortality is an awesome gift, it is not the only reward for pursuing and living a righteous life. As you continue to study this subject, take note of the awesome rewards and potential for a meaningful and pleasure-filled life beyond this physical existence for those who diligently pursue a righteous life.

JOINT-HEIR WITH CHRIST

"The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom.8:16-18 KJV).

"But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Wherefore you are no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal.4:4-7 KJV).

INHERIT ALL THINGS

"He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev.21:7 KJV). See also Heb.1:1-2, 5-8.

What an amazing reward! Not only are the righteous heirs but also joint-heirs with Jesus. And they will share in the inheritance of all that exists now and forever.

INHERIT THE EARTH

Part of the promise that God gave to Abraham was that he and his decedents would inherit the earth and be a blessing to all nations forever. See Gen.12:2-3; 13:15-16; 15:7; 18:18; 26:1-5; Rom.4:13.

"For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth" (Psa.37:9 KJV). See also verses 11,22,29,34; Psa.72:8; Matt.5:5; Gal.3:29.

The scriptures clearly show that, when the righteous become spirit-beings, they will inherit the earth. However, what possible use could they have for a physical earth? It seems that, after Christ's return, the earth will be of no use to them unless God is not finished with his plan for humanity. Herein lies one of the purposes of the earth as an inheritance, and one of the reasons that the first resurrection is the better resurrection.

INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King [Jesus] say unto them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father [God the Father], inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt.25:31-34 KJV). See also Jms.2:5.

Those in the first resurrection will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven as a part of their reward:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt.5:3 KJV). See also Matt.5:5; 25:31-34.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of God, and inheriting this government is just one of the many rewards that the elect of God will receive after Christ's return.

CO-RULERSHIP WITH CHRIST

King David

Ezekiel was inspired to tell of a time when all of Israel would again be a nation under God's leadership with David as their king:

"And David my servant shall be king over them; and they shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever" (Ezk.37:24-25 KJV). See also Zech.12:8-10.

The Apostles

On two different occasions, Jesus promised that the twelve disciples would rule the earth with him.

"Then answering, Peter said to him, Behold, we have left all things and followed you: what then shall happen to us? And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, You who have followed me; in the regeneration, when the Son of man sits on his throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt.19:27-28 Para.).

"You are those having continued with me in my trials. And I appoint a kingdom to you, as my Father appointed to me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk.22:28-30 Para.).

The Overcomers to Rule With Christ

"To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev.3:21 KJV).

"And he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces: even as I received of my Father" (Rev.2:26-27 KJV). See also 1.Cor.6:2-3.

BECOME A KING AND A PRIEST

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And has made us kings and priests to God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev.1:4-6 KJV).

"And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev.5:10 KJV).

Here, John speaks in the future tense, saying that the elect are kings and priests (i.e., king-priests), which indicates that, as far as the Father is concerned, this reward and responsibility has already been given to those who will participate in the first resurrection.

"You also, as living stones, are being built a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Because indeed it is also contained in the scripture, 'Behold I lay in Zion an elect, precious Stone, a Corner-foundation; and the one believing in Him shall never in any way be ashamed" (1.Pet.2:5-6 Para.).

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing" (2.Tim.4:8 KJV). See Matt.16:21; Rev.11:18; 14:12-13; 22:12.

"But you are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for possession, so that you may openly speak of the virtues of the One who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1.Pet.2:9 Para.). See also Rev.1:4-6.

PENTECOST, A NEW BEGINNING

Many people wrongly assume that the elect will be in heaven forever; however, the first resurrection is only the ending of one aspect of God's plan for the salvation of humanity and the beginning of another.

After Christ returns on the Feast of Pentecost and the first resurrection has been accomplished, there will not be a single person left alive on earth with the spirit of God. The earth will then receive the last trumpet plagues, which will almost completely destroy the earth and its inhabitants because of their refusal to repent of their sins against God. The people of earth will be in a state of confusion, terror, and shock. They will wonder what has happened and how they are going to survive. Into such a world, Christ and the elect will return to bring joy, peace, happiness, and harmony.

Major Responsibilities

One of the first major responsibilities for those in the first resurrection is to assist in the conversion of humanity to the ways of God. See 1.Tim.2:4; 2.Pet.3:9.

For this task, true Christians are being trained and prepared through trials, tests, hardships, persecution, tribulation, continued study of God's word, and prayer. All of this will help them to grow in grace and knowledge so they will be able to fulfill an office as king-priests in order to rule and teach God's truth to those who have never heard or understood the way to salvation.

Those in the first resurrection will be the examples, leaders, and teachers for the rest of humanity who have never had an opportunity for salvation. The elect are the ones who will teach the rest of humanity the way of God.

SUMMARY

On the Feast of Weeks, the Israelites rejoiced before God and remembered the slavery of Egypt and how and for what purpose God had delivered them from it:


"And rejoice before the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his name—you, your sons and daughters, your maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and follow carefully these

decrees" (Deut.16 KJV).

The celebration of the Day of Pentecost for the elect of God today has a far different meaning from the literal meaning for which it was observed by the Israelites of antiquity.

Today, this festival should be celebrated with the understanding of its past symbolic and prophetic fulfillment along with its contemporary and future meanings for those of the household of God.

The celebration of this festival today should also include a joyful anticipation of the first resurrection and the transformation from the flesh to an immortal spirit-being in the Family of God. In addition, we should celebrate the beginning of a life of joy, peace, happiness, and accomplishment, which is almost beyond our imagination and comprehension.

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THE LIFT OFFERING AND THE COUNTING OF PENTECOST

Unfortunately, the English translations of the scriptures concerning the Lift Offering cloud the meaning and intent of God's instructions concerning how to calculate the day of Pentecost. Fortunately, however, it is possible to understand God's intended meaning through the original Hebrew language in which these instructions were given.

Most people avoid researching topics in the original language of the Bible and rely on various commentaries and Bible helps as the last word in Bible research. However, this is a very dangerous practice when it comes to difficult biblical concepts, because most Bible commentaries and helps are very biased in their presentations. Admittedly, it is difficult to do Bible research using the original languages; however, the rewards are worth the effort.

The Bible is structured in a very careful and logical manner. The Creator's instructions as to the day on which to give the Lift Offering and how to calculate the Feast of Pentecost were presented in a way that would ensure that there could be no mistake made in the day of its observance.

During Christ's Lifetime

During Jesus' lifetime, there were two primary schools of thought concerning how to calculate the date on which to observe the Feast of Pentecost:

- The Pharisees believed that the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread was the point from which Pentecost should be calculated. Using the Pharisees' method, the feast would always fall on the sixth day of Sivan.
- The Sadducees believed that the first Sabbath after the first festival day of Unleavened Bread was the point from which Pentecost should be calculated. Using the Sadducees' method, the feast would always fall on the first day of the week (Sunday) but not on a fixed date during the month of Sivan.

Although the majority of the Sadducees were of the priesthood and had the responsibility to maintain the integrity of the worship system, they were outnumbered by the Pharisees who had the support of the general population. The opinion of the Pharisees was generally accepted as "truth" by the people, and the temple authorities were obliged to comply with the Pharisees instructions concerning many rituals.

The biblical record clearly shows that the Sadducees were correct in their method of calculating the Lift Offering and the Feast of Weeks, because they correctly understood the word 'shabbat' in Leviticus 23:11 to mean the weekly Sabbath, not the first festival day of Unleavened Bread.

There were four reasons why the Pharisees were incorrect in their belief that the 16th of Abib/Nisan was the day to observe the Lift Offering:

1. Although it is clear from the instruction concerning the first and last days of the Festival of Unleavened Bread that all work of labor is prohibited on these days and that these are commanded festivals, nowhere in the Bible are these two days referred to as a Shabbat or a Shabbat Shabbaton. This omission would seem to indicate that God wanted to clearly establish that the day of the Lift Offering was to be after a weekly Sabbath (shabbat), which was the day from which to begin the count toward the Festival of Pentecost.
2. The day of this Lift Offering was the day to begin counting toward Pentecost (Deut.16:9; Lev.23:15-16). The following weekly Sabbath was the seventh day, which made the seventh Sabbath the 49th day and the next day the 50th day. This 50th day always fell on the first day of the week, which was the same day of the week that the counting began.
3. If the Pharisees were correct in their method of counting from the 16th of Nisan, the 50th day would always fall on the 6th of Sivan, which would make counting the days unnecessary.
4. The biblical record of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ confirms that the Sadducees' method of calculation was correct.

The Festival Instruction

Leviticus 23:1-16

"The lord said to Moses, 'Speak to the Israelites and say to them'. These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies. There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord" (vs.1-3 NIV).

The English word 'Sabbath' is translated from the Hebrew word 'shabbat', which specifically refers to the seventh day of the week. This is very important to understand, because nowhere in the scriptures is an annual festival ever referred to by the word 'shabbat' by itself, because the weekly Sabbath and the annual festivals are distinctly different types of celebrations.

With the knowledge of the difference in vocabulary between the weekly Sabbath and the annual festivals, there can be no confusion as to which day is being spoken of as the day from which to calculate Pentecost. However, the Pharisees interpreted the word 'shabbat' in Leviticus 23:11 as referring to the first day of Unleavened Bread.

Next we see the annual festivals mentioned:

"These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations to proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same

month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Seven days you must eat unleavened bread. In the first day you shall have a holy convocation: you shall do no servile work therein" (vs.4-7 KJV).

Notice that, on the first and last days of Unleavened Bread, there are to be holy convocations in which doing one's work is prohibited:

"But you shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation; you shall do no servile work therein" (v8 KJV).

There are two very important things to take note of at this point in our study:

1. There are only two days during this festival on which there is to be a holy convocation (apart from the normal observance of the Sabbath).
2. The word 'shabbat' is not used in relationship to either of these two days.

The absence of any reference to either of these days being a Sabbath is very important to understanding which day to offer the Lift Offering, and how to calculate the correct day on which to observe Pentecost.

The following verses are very important because the meaning of the Hebrew words used are very clear. God says to wave the sheaf of grain after the weekly Sabbath:

"The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the Lord so that it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath" (vs.9-11 NIV).

"And you shall count from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the Wave Offering, seven Sabbaths shall be complete, even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall you number fifty days and offer a new meat offering to the Lord" (vs.15-16 KJV).

The word 'shabbat' is used in the phrase 'on the morrow after the sabbath'—'Mi Mahorat ha Shabbat'. Remember that the word 'shabbat' is only used to define the weekly Sabbath.

In the remainder of Leviticus, the rest of the annual festivals are referred to with various instructions as to how they should be observed. Again, none of them are referred to as a 'shabbat' in the original Hebrew language.

Note:

With the exception of the first and last day of Unleavened Bread, the sacred assemblies of the annual

festivals are referred to using the word 'shabbaton', and the Day of Atonement is described as a 'Shabbat-Shabbaton' because of the prohibition of all work including food preparation. See our study concerning the differences between the Sabbath and the days of holy convocation.

In Leviticus 23, the careful use of the term 'holy convocation' to refer to the annual festivals is extremely important. Without this careful use of the Hebrew language in chapter 23, it would be very difficult to determine whether it is the first day of Unleavened Bread or the Sabbath day which occurs within the Feast of Unleavened Bread that must be used in calculating the date of Pentecost.

A Review

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is the reference point from which to calculate the day on which to observe the Feast of Pentecost. Moreover, neither the first or the last day on which there are to be sacred assemblies are defined as Sabbaths.

The following are the instructions concerning which day to observe the Wave Sheaf Offering and where to begin and end the Pentecost calculations:

"He is to wave the sheaf before the Lord so that it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath" (Lev.23:11 NIV).

The original Hebrew language confirms the NIV Translation of verse 11 using the words 'Mi Mahorat ha Shabbat', which literally means 'on the day after the shabbat' (i.e., 'on the day after the weekly Sabbath').

God inspired Moses to write the following in order to eliminate any confusion in calculating the exact day on which to observe Pentecost:

"And you shall count from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the Wave Offering, seven Sabbaths shall be complete, even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall you number fifty days and offer a new meat offering to the Lord" (Lev.23:15-16 KJV).

Again, the original language uses the word 'shabbat', which can only refer to the seventh day of the week (the weekly Sabbath) as the day from which to begin to count the days to Pentecost. Notice that seven 'shabbats' (49 days) must be completed, and the day after the 'shabbat' (the first day of the week—Sunday) is the 50th day (Pentecost).

"Count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. Then celebrate the feast of weeks . . ." (Deut.16:9-10 NIV).

The Jubilee Year

The calculation process for the year of Jubilee is a clear example of how God intends a sacred cycle of 50 to be calculated using a sacred cycle of seven. A Jubilee year occurs on the 50th year, which is actually the first year of the next Jubilee cycle of 7, seven-year cycles that equal 49 years. The calculation for the Feast of Weeks follows this same pattern, except it consists of days instead of years to indicate the time of its observance. See Lev.25:1-12.

The historical evidence and the scriptures clearly show that the seven weeks noted in verse 9 refer to God's sacred weekly cycle of seven days, which begins with the first day of the week (Sunday) and ends with the seventh day of the week (Saturday).

If we count 49 days beginning with the first day of one week (Sunday) and ending with the last day of the seventh week (Saturday) and add one day to make 50 days, we arrive at the first day of the eighth week, which is a Sunday—the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost).

Facts:

- The original language of verse 11 clearly defines the day of the Wave Sheaf offering as the day after the weekly Sabbath.
- The original language is very specific and clearly defines the day which is to be used to begin the counting process as the weekly Sabbath.
- If God had intended to refer to the first day of Unleavened Bread in any of above scriptures, he would not have used the word 'shabbat', which can only refer to the weekly Sabbath; he would have used the word 'shabbaton'.
- Nowhere in scripture are the first or the last day of Unleavened Bread called a 'shabbat' or a 'shabbaton'; they are always referred to as feast days or sacred assemblies (holy convocations).

LOGIC:

Because there is never a reference to the first or last days of Unleavened Bread being a Sabbath in any way, shape, or form, the only logical conclusion that can be made when one makes an analysis of the original language contained in these scriptures is that the word 'shabbat' refers to the first weekly Sabbath that occurs within the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Why Count?

If Pentecost was to be observed on a fixed date of the month, there would be no reason for the instruction to count 50 days. The only logical reason to count is that Pentecost will occur on a different date on the sacred calendar from year to year, but it will always be on the same day of the week—Sunday.

If the Pharisees' method of calculation was correct, why would God give such seemingly ridiculous instructions to count toward a day that always fell on the same calendar date? Obviously the Pharisees

were wrong, and the counting should start on the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

Prophetic Fulfillment

In order for Jesus to fulfill the prophetic symbolism of the Passover and the Lift Offering in exact detail, both events had to occur in a sequence that would allow for Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension to God the Father within a three day period.

Just as surely as Jesus rose from the dead on the third day according to the scriptures (1.Cor.15:3), Christ's acceptance as the first fruits of humanity (1.Cor.15:20,22) was the fulfillment of the prophetic meaning of the Lift Offering.

The Problem

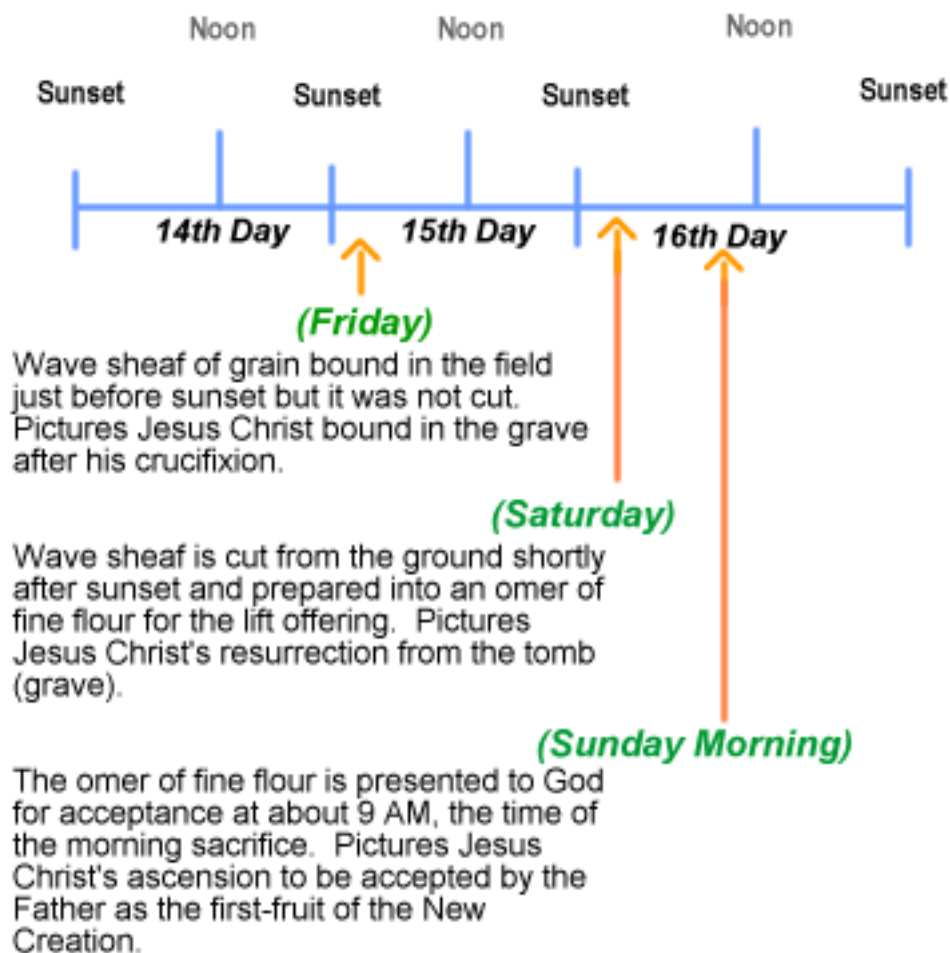
Because it was the Pharisees' opinion that made Temple policy and practice during Christ's lifetime, the Pharisees' mistake in counting created a problem for the fulfillment of prophecy because the Pharisees caused the Lift Offering to be held on the wrong day.

How did God resolve this error in order to allow Jesus to fulfill the prophetic symbolism of the Passover and the lift offering with exact detail and in chronological order?

Any serious student of Bible history knows that the Bible is full of dates on which certain events have occurred and will occur, and that history records that many of these prophetic events occurred exactly as scheduled. It is beyond comprehension that God the Father would allow the most important prophetic event of all time to occur on the wrong day.

The logical solution to this problem is for Jesus' crucifixion, to happen on the sixth day of the week (Friday), which indicates that the 15th of Abib/Nisan must have been a weekly Sabbath. This would also mean that the Sabbath was on the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, which was noted by the apostle John (Jn.19:31). Therefore, the day after the weekly Sabbath was the 16th of Abib/Nisan. In this way, the Pharisees and the Sadducees would be in agreement and would be observing the Lift Offering at the same time.

Lift Offering Sequence Fulfilled By Christ-30A.D.



From the beginning of Jesus Christ's ministry to this present day, there have been very few times when the Passover, the first day of Unleavened Bread, and the Lift Offering have fallen on days that would fulfill all of the prophetic requirements of the two methods of determining the Lift Offering and Pentecost.

One of these rare times in history occurred in 30 A.D., when the Calendar Court sanctioned two consecutive Passover observances because of some confusion as to the day of the new moon, which began the month of Abib/Nisan. During that year, the second Passover meal was just after sunset on Friday and in the evening of the weekly Sabbath, which was also the first day of Unleavened Bread.

Both the Pharisees and the Sadducees were counting from the Sabbath that was within the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which made the day of the Lift Offering the first day of the week (Sunday). Thus, the requirements of God overcame the error of the Pharisees and the lifting up of his Son occurred at the same time as the lifting up of the grain of the first-fruits of the barley harvest in the Temple.

The witness of these events is without question and happened on days and dates which would satisfy the prophetic symbolism of the Lift Offering. Moreover, both the Pharisees' and Sadducees' beliefs

concerning the date of the Lift Offering and the calculation of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) were in agreement.

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